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THE
BLACK BOOK
OF
CONSCIENCE:
OR,

GOD's great and high COURT of
JUSTICE in the SOUL.

Wherein the truth and fincerity, the deceit and
hypocrisis of every man's heart and ways are
judged and discovered by their consciences.

Very seasonable for these times; wherein wicked men,
under pretence of liberty of conscience, take liberty
to sin and blaspheme.

*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately
wicked, who can know it? I the Lord search the heart,
and try the reins; even to give every man according
to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings,
Jer. xvii 6, 10*

*Unto the pure all things are pure; but to them that are
defiled and unbelieving, as nothing pure; but even their
mind and conscience is defiled, Tit. i. 15.*

By ANDREW JONES.

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ALAGBOK

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THE
Black Book of CONSCIENCE.



Rev. xx. 12. And I saw the dead small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of these things which were written in the books, according to their works.

AS there are several books of God, which he hath written for the good of all the children of men, so there are two special books, by which the Lord will proceed in judgment against all the sons and daughters of men. The books which God hath given to the children of men, for their use and comfort of salvation, are these, first and chiefly, the books of the old and new testament: wherein Jesus Christ in all his offices, as prophet, priest and king, for to rule us and guide us, by his spirit in our hearts, is made known and declared unto us. And there is likewise set down therein how every one of us ought to live & demean himself in this present world, with several fearful examples of God's heavy judgments against wicked and notorious sinners, in drowning the old world, for their sins and wickedness; as you may see in the sixth of *Genesis*. So likewise in destroying *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, by fire from heaven, *Gen. xix. 24, 25*. And the Lord rained upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* fire and brimstone, and overthrew those cities, and all their inhabitants; withundry other fearful examples of God's heavy wrath and indig-

nation against sin and sinners, in general and in particular. All which, as St. Jude saith in his epistle, are set for for our examples, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Not for our examples, that we should do as they did, but that we should be afraid to do as they did, to commit such sins, lest the Lord lay upon us such, or more heavier weights of wrath and vengeance.

So likewise, in the book of the scriptures, is set forth the blessed and happy state and condition of all the godly both in this life, & the life to come, as you may see Ps. i. and Ps. xv. and Ps. xcii. *The godly man shall be delivered from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence, and because he hath made the Lord his refuge, there shall no evil befall him: so he shall give his angels charge over him, to keep him in all his ways; Ver. 20, 21.* The joys that are prepared for the godly, and the eternal torments that are appointed for the wicked are likewise set forth there in the book of the scriptures; as you may see, *Mat. xxv. 34. and 41. Verbes. To the godly, Come ye blessed of my Father, saith Christ, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the beginning of the world.* But to the ungodly, *Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels.*

Another great book of God, is the book of the creature, containing these mighty works both of creation and providence, wherein the almightiness, power, and goodness of God, are so plainly written, that he that runs may read and see it: for as the apostle saith, *Rom. ix. 20. The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood, saith the apostle, by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.* Who but an almighty God could out of nothing, create all things; and being created, rule and govern all things? As David saith, *It is nothing but the almighty power and providence of God, that bears up the earth, and upholds the foundations thereof.* And this book, even the heathens who know not God or his word,

who never heard of Jesus Christ or salvation, are acquainted with: they, I say, by seeing and reading the mighty works of God in the world, confess, and say, "Verily, there is a God, and none but God could create these glorious creatures, the sun, moon and stars."

Solikewise, there are two special books, by which God will judge all the sons and daughters of men at the last day; and these are, first, The book of his remembrance, written by himself; wherein the lives of men, yea, their very thoughts are recorded, as *David* saith, *Psal.* xciv. 11. *The Lord knoweth the thoughts of men that they are vanity.* And *Psal.* cxxxix. 1, 2, 3, 4. Saith *David*, *O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me: Thou knowest my down-sitting and my up-rising. Thou understandest my thoughts afar off. Thou compassest my path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. There is not a word in my mouth, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.* And altho' the heart of man, as *Jeremiah* saith, *Jer.* xvii. 9. 10. is deceitful above all things; yet, God doth exactly know every turning and corner thereof; *I, the Lord, search the heart,* saith he, *I try the reins.* There is nothing can be hid from his eternal, all-seeing eye.

And then, *secondly*, there is the book of conscience, in which is exactly written all our actions, thoughts, words and deeds; and according to this book of conscience, and what is therein written, will the Lord proceed in judgment, and every man's conscience shall be his own judge. Saith God, *What hast thou done? How hast thou lived in the world? Why, thus and thus have I lived,* saith, conscience. Conscience will then speak the truth, and nothing but the truth. *O Lord,* saith a wicked man's conscience, *I have dishonoured thy name, I have abused thy grace and mercy, in turning it into wantonness; I have abused thy creatures by wasteful and riotous spending, to please and satisfy my lust,* saith the prodigal man's conscience. And by *chambering and wantonness, by game*

ing and dicing away my precious time, saith the lascivious and voluptuous man's conscience. Thou gavest me many times and seasons of grace and mercy, and many gracious opportunities, and soul advantages, whereby I might have wrought out my own salvation with fear and trembling, and, as *St. Peter* saith, I might have made my calling and election sure to my own soul. And instead of working out my salvation with fear and trembling, and making my calling and election sure, I have wrought out my own damnation, without either fear or wit, and made myself sure of eternal and everlasting condemnation, saith the mere moral, formal, and prophane Christian's conscience. Ah! Lord, saith the dissembling hypocrite's conscience, I have been but an outside Christian: I have gone to church, but only as dogs do, for fashion's sake, and to be looked upon, and esteemed among my neighbours; I have made a shew indeed, and pretence of religion and holiness; but it hath been but a mere shew: I have altogether denied the power and practice of it in my life and conversation, as it is, *Tim. i. 16. They profess that they know God; but in works deny, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate.* And why so? *Because;* as he saith in the 5th ver. *their mind and consciences are defiled.* Ah! my conscience told me severall times that I was but an hypoerite, a mere painted sepulchre, fair without, and foul within. O! but I would not hear conscience then, but neglected him. Ah! now my conscience makes me fear him whether I will or not; therefore, Lord, do with me what thou pleasest: true and righteous art thou in all thy dealing towards me; be they never so harsh, they are but the just rewards of my iniquities. And saith the covetous man's conscience, and the gripping, cruel, extorting usurer's conscience, Lord, I confess, I have been a covetous wretch; but I have not coveted after heaven. It hath been my whole trade to cozen and to cheat others, and to grind the face of the poor; all that I could do

to undo others ; but alas for me ! what have I done ? I have quite and clean undone my own soul, and that to all eternity. I have been very cruel and unmerciful to others ; I would not forgive my poor brethren in the least. O Lord, I deserve no mercy at thy hands, the hottest place in hell will be too cold for me.

What have you done with all your wealth, saith God to rich men, all these great estates and possessions which I lent you, or rather entrusted you with as stewards ? how have you improved them ? What of them have you laid out in relieving my poor members ? have you laid up any thing for eternal life ? O ! no, saith conscience, I have not, Lord, I have not ; but this have I done, I have treasured up wrath against the day of wrath. My gold and my silver is rusted, my riches are corrupted, and rich garments moth-eaten, as St. *James* saith in his 5th chap. 12 and 14 verses. My gold and my silver is cankered, and the rust of them is now a witness against me to condemn me, and eats my flesh as it were fire. And now also behold the hire of the labourers which have reaped down my field, which I have kept back by fraud, crieth ; and the cries of them who have reaped, are entred into the ears of the Lord of Sabbaoth. I have lived in pleasure upon the earth, and been wanton, I have nourished my heart as for a day of slaughter. I told you, saith conscience, that for all your greatness and delights, you must come to judgment, and give an account to God of all your actions, and for all your wealth, and how, and which way you spent every penny that he lent you. Did I not tell you, saith conscience ? True it is, my conscience told me ; but I slighted conscience, as a thing of no value or account. Ah miserable man that I was ! to slight this good voice of conscience. Woe unto me my punishment is less than mine iniquities deserve. Thus and thus will men's consciences deal with them before the Lord.

When as *Peter* denied his Lord and master, his conscience let him alone once; yea, twice; but the third time the cock crew, and *Peter's* heart smote him for what he had done, and he went forth and wept bitterly. *Peter* do not go about to stop the mouth of conscience, as *Judas* did, and so hanged himself; No, *Peter* closed with the voice of his conscience, and so by his true and unfeigned repentance, obtained mercy.

So likewise *David*, when the prophet *Nathan*, in 2 *Sam.* xii. 13. had, by the parable of the ew-lamb, shewed *David* the evil of his sins, presently *David* was convinced in his conscience, of the horridness of his sins. And *David* said unto *Nathan*, *I have sinned against the Lord; have mercy upon me, saith David, Psalm li.* (the Psalm of his repentance) *according to thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions; wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin: for I acknowledge my transgression, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, even thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.* *David* had a very tender conscience, for when he cut *Saul's* skirt, his heart smote him, his conscience accused him, as you may see, 1 *Sam.* xxi. 5. O but how many wicked men are there now, whose consciences tell them over and over, again and again of their sins, and yet for all that, they stop their ears against conscience: How many times doth the beastly drunkard's conscience, the prophane swearer's, the sabbath breakers conscience, tell them of their sins; yet, notwithstanding for all the checks of conscience, they will go on in their sins, and fill up the measure of their iniquities, and so make conscience to fill up the black scroll of indictments against them, whereby they are all everlastingly condemned. O if men would be but convicted in their consciences of the evil of their ways, when their conscience tells them of it! How many thousands might be brought home by repentance to life

eternal, who now run headlong to their destruction! I am persuaded that many who cozen and cheat, by undermining and over-selling, by using false and light weights and measures, cannot chuse but meet with many checks from their consciences. And O that men would be convinced of their great evil.

Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy by false weights and measures! O be convinced in thy conscience, make conscience thy friend now, by forsaking thy evil practices, lest conscience prove thy foe to torment thee for ever. But men now a-days, instead of being convinced in their consciences of the evil of their ways, are not ashamed to commit all manner of abominations, and that with greediness, and then lay all the blame upon their poor consciences: and why so? it was my conscience, say they. As many of our diabolical *Ranters*, *Quakers*, and notorious *Libertines*, in these our days, have laid all their impieties, and horrid blasphemies upon their consciences. Ask them but the reason why they deny Christ and the scriptures, and cast off the ordinances and ministry of Christ, and live as they list, and refuse subjection to magistrates, and in their actions become worse than beasts; why they do hold such damnable and devilish opinions both against God and Christ; yea, against humanity itself! Ask them the reason of these things, and what do they say? It is from the light within us, it is from the liberty of conscience: and have we not fought for liberty of conscience? Ah! cursed wretches. the light within you is darkness: is this the liberty of thy conscience. No, no, this is the liberty of thy lusts, and the delusions of the Devil. Thou hast seared thy conscience with a hot iron; but yet at last thy conscience, though thou hast defiled it never so much, will put the saddle upon the right horse, and charge thee home with all the blame. Is liberty of conscience, a liberty to sin? No, God forbid; *Shall we sin*, saith St. Paul, Rom. vi. 1. *that grace may abound?* O God forbid, I dare not. saith, "a gracious heart, conscience tells me I must not," How

shall I, saith Joseph, Gen. xxx. 7. do this great wickedness and sin against God? The grace of God, saith the Apostle Tit. ii. 11. that brings salvation, teacheth men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world; and not to live as we list, which is a sign of no grace at all.

A truly tender conscience will be very tender of committing sin, and will have a circumspect care over himself how he walks, and how he lives, and so the name of God and Christ be not blasphemed: *but in these last and worst of times, wherein men, as St. Paul saith, make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience: men have not minded this at all, but have taken full liberty to commit all manner of sins. And I pray God that this sin be not charged upon those, who instead of restraining men from sin, and punishing them for sin, have tolerated them in sin, if not countenanced them to sin. But let men take heed how they sin, because grace abounds: For, saith the apostle, Heb. x. 26. 27. if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and a fiery indignation from the Lord. For the wrath of God, Rom. i. 8. is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth of God in unrighteousness. Read these two texts, all ye that take liberty to sin, because the grace of God hath abounded. How will you be able to look God and conscience in the face: certainly you will never be able to do it, unless you repent; for if men will sin willingly notwithstanding all these checks of conscience, their consciences will condemn them before the Lord. For certain it is, there is a conscience in every man, that sees and observes, and takes notice of all his ways, and will keep a just account of them, and so be a witness either for or against the soul, at the day of judgment. What was it that made the apostles so joyful in all their troubles and persecutions? Was it not*

the witness of their conscience? See 2 *Cor.* i. 12. *Our rejoicing in this*, saith St. Paul, *the testimony of our consciences.* What was it made Paul and Silas sing in prison for joy? Was it not that their conscience told them that they were happy and blessed men, notwithstanding all their sufferings and reproches.

Now what conscience is, I shall briefly show you, and to conclude. Conscience is a thing with which God endued the soul of man by creation, and is for our comfort, if we live as we ought to do; but will be a dreadful terror to them that live and die in their sins. For this conscience was in Adam before the fall, tho' not as a condemner till his fall; for where there is no sin, what needeth an accuser? So long as Adam kept the commandments of God, there was no cause of conscience to condemn him: but as soon as Adam transgress'd it flew in his face, which made him flee from the face of God, as you may see, *Gen.* iii. 7, 8. *The eyes of them both were opened*, their consciences accused them, and they hid themselves. And this conscience is only in men and women, for brute beasts, wanting reason, are not capable of conscience, and the beasts when they die there is an end of them. But it is not so with man, for conscience in man followeth the man further than the grave. For if men might bury their conscience with them in their graves, they might be happy notwithstanding all their abuses of conscience: for men often times, against all reason, equity or conscience, doth worse than the worst of beasts. And this conscience keepeth his court in the heart, and there sets up the life or the death of the soul: and according as he finds every man's work, so doth he pass sentence of condemnation or absolution, for there is no bribing of conscience. Conscience will speak the truth of every man's ways before the Lord, be they good or be they evil: *If our hearts condemn us*, saith St. John, 1 John iii. 10. *God is greater than our hearts.* That is, our conscience.

And God hath given this power to conscience, be-

cause men would have no plea or excuse before the Lord. It was not *Pilate's* washing of his hands, and saying, *I am guiltless of the blood of this just man*, that could wash away the guilt of Christ's blood from his conscience: *Pilate's* conscience told him, that Christ was a just man, and that he saw no cause of death in him at all, *Luke xxiii. 24.* And yet cursed *Pilate*, contrary to the light of his own conscience, delivered the Lord of life into the hands of bloody men to be crucified, and so brought the guilt of his blood upon his own soul.

He that will not endure conscience to reprove him for his sins, certainly he loves to go to hell without controul; and he that will not endure conscience to tell him of his sins here, shall whether he will or no, suffer sufficient torment for his sins hereafter; for an evil conscience is an hell to the soul here, and shall be the hell of hells hereafter.

Now then, if there be such a thing in man as conscience, and that this conscience shall either justify or condemn him, then let every man take heed how he orders his conversation in the world. Do not give leave to yourselves to think, say or do any thing but what you are willing to own before the Lord at the last day. Therefore, let every one of us so think, and so do, that we may not have conscience to condemn us; but let us live as those that expect to have conscience witnesses for them before the Lord, that with godly sincerity they have had their conversation in the world. But what multitudes are there in this world, that live as there were no conscience at all, neither God nor Devil, neither heaven nor hell; *whose God is their belly, and whose end is destruction*, as St. Paul saith, *Phil. iii. 9 Who declare their sin as Sodom, and hide it not. Woe unto them, saith the Lord, they have rewarded evil to themselves.* *Isa. iii. 6.* This may be said of thousands of us, whose countenance testify against them, their wanton carriages, painted faces, naked breasts, powdered locks, and other antic fashions, testily a-

gainst thousands of both men and women, that they do little mind this great truth, that conscience can and will declare all their doings to God. Proud *Hamans*, drunken *Nabals*, whoring *Jezebels*, declare their sin as *Sodom*, and hide it not. And as for conscience, they turn him off. But let these miserable wretches know this, as the prophet saith, *Woe unto them that have rewarded evil unto themselves*. They have a long black bloody bill for conscience to open against them at the last day of the term of their lives: as soon as ever their souls are departed from their bodies, sentence shall be passed against them, according to their light and testimony of their own conscience.

Seeing then, conscience will give an account of every one's ways, let us not slight conscience; let us not stop the mouth of conscience, seeing conscience can and will speak, and tell us what we are. Many there are, that go about to stop the mouth of conscience, when conscience deals plainly with them, and tells them of their sins: O! they cannot endure to hear of that. But remember the miserable end of *Judas*: what said *Judas*' conscience to him? thou hast betrayed thy Lord and Master for a little silver: Ah covetous wretch! But could *Judas*' silver stop the mouth of his conscience? No, *Judas*' conscience so terrified him, that he hung in the money again, and so went and hanged himself.

So likewise, remember the fearful state of *Spira*, and many others, whose conscience made them possess the wrath of God here on earth. *A wounded spirit*, saith *Solomon*, *Prov. viii. 14. who can bear?* A tormenting and condemning conscience who can endure? O! there is no resisting of conscience; it is God's vicegerent in the soul, when conscience speaks threatening language to many, for such and such sins, they seek to turn conscience out of doors. But because they cannot possibly do this, they strive to stop his mouth, by running wilfully into sins, like men that desperately give up their souls the Devil, and so make shipwreck of faith.

conscience, soul, and all for ever. And then followeth (what we have seen by woful experience) self-stabbing, self-hanging, drowning or poisoning, or some such like accursed end. O consider this, all that forget God, and make no conscience of your way; you undermine your own salvation. Men deal with conscience as *Felix* did with *Paul*, *Acts* xxiv. 15. They will hear conscience so long as he speaks gross; but when conscience tells them roughly of their sins, their darling sins, then they have enough of conscience, and so put him off till they be at better leisure.

When there was no king in *Israel*, every man did what was good in his own eyes; so where there is no conscience alive in the soul, men live as they list. But yet for all this, conscience will speak home at last.

If thou art a drunkard, or an adulterer, or an unjust dealer, or whatsoever sin it is that thou art guilty of, conscience will make it known. And if at last conscience doth condemn thou shalt never be saved. But on the contrary, though men and Devils say thou art an hypocrite or the like, yet if thou hast the testimony of thy conscience, God will own thee as just and righteous. One dram of peace of conscience, is worth a thousand worlds, what would the damned in hell give for a little of this lasting joy, this peace which passeth all understanding: the want of this is hell; yea, worse than hell.

Think upon this, O ye great ones of the world, who live in pleasure! remember that there is a conscience, and that there is a God, and that thou hast a precious and immortal soul, which if thy conscience witness against, thou shalt be thrown into hell. You that eat the fat and sweet of the earth, and drink wine in bowls, and clothe yourselves in silks, remember this, that conscience takes notice of all thy ways, of the pride of thy heart, of the vanity of thy life, and setteth all down in this black book. You that like the harlot, *Prov.* vii. cry, let us take our fill of love and pleasure, consider that all these things must have an end. When

all is done, the bell must toll, and you must all dance after death's pipe, who are now singing and swinging yourse'ves in worldly pleasures and delights. O! if God would say to any soul of you, as he did to the rich fool in Luke xiv. 20. This night thy soul shall be taken from thee. It shall little advantage you then to weep and cry, O! that I were out of these infernal and eternal flames, O! that I had hearkned when time was, to the voice of Christ and mine own conscience.

The sighs and groans of dying men are often very sad; but the cries and groans of the damned in hell can never be imagined nor expressed. O! consider this ye that sin away conscience, that quaff and drink away conscience, accompanying one another in sin; take heed you be not one day to weep over one anothers backs in hell. Certainly whole coachfuls of gallants will be tumbled down to hell; the Lord awaken your sleepy dead consciences before you go hence and be no more seen. What pity is it that persons that bear the image of God, and are as it were in outside glory and beauty, Gods above others: what pity is it that such beauty should come to be embraced by ugly loathsome Devils in hell. Thousands there are that court and sport, pin and paint away their time, whose end is to be burned, and shall at last perish in hell. Fruitless fig-trees they are, that bear nothing but leaves. Cut them down, says Christ, and cast them into the fire. To perish in a prison, or on a dunghill, is nothing: to die for want of food is nothing. Lazarus did so, whilst Dives with his delicious fare died on his bed of downs, and was cast into hell. You that lie on beds of ivory, and have your hangings of needle work, if you get not Christ and a good conscience, hell shall be your fate, and Devils your companions, to torment you for ever. And who shall be able to stand in the day of the Lord's wrath: and who can dwell with everlasting burning.

Companions in sin, shall be companions in hell; and those that can sport and play one with another, shall in hell drag and torment one another, and curse the day that ever they saw one another, and cry out to one another, O what mi-

Wretched wretches were we! to lose the heaven of heavens, for little vain delight, the love and favour of God, for the love and favour of wicked companions, in whose presence we were more delighted, than in the everlasting love of God, whose pleasures are pleasures for evermore. What profiteth now that we have had our wine and our music, our fill and our fall of earthly delights? O wretched creatures that we are, who shall deliver us from this death, these miserable torments! Woe unto us! we have rewarded evil to our own souls, we are banished for ever from the presence of the Lord, and have utterly lost that inward peace of conscience, the want thereof, addeth torments to our torments, and maketh us in our miseries more exceeding miserable.

Now, the Lord give every one of us this peace, this joy: the which that we may all have, the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep our hearts and minds in the love and knowledge of Jesus Christ; and wash and purge our consciences from dead works, that we may serve the living God. Which that we may all do, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all. Amen.

*Take heed to yourselves what conscience you have,
For conscience will damn, and conscience will save.*

F I N I S.



